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U. S. Has Super Plane

2,000 M. P. H. INTERCEPTOR NOW IN TESTS

World's Fastest, Johnson Says

BY ROBERT YOUNG
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, Feb. 29—President Johnson disclosed today that the United States is test-flying a new 2,000-mile-an-hour, super-altitude warplane with a performance far exceeding that of any existing aircraft in the world.

The President disclosed further at a news conference that development of this long-range interceptor plane has been underway in secrecy since 1959.

He said technical data obtained from the new military plane will be applied to the forthcoming development of the supersonic commercial transport plane. A survey and report on the transport plane development will be made public next Monday.

Responses to Questions

Johnson also said today in response to news conference questions that:

1. South Viet Nam continues to be "a very difficult situation," but reports that the United States-supported war against the Communists in that

Asian nation has "gone to pot" are unfounded.

2. He will appoint William P. Bundy assistant secretary of state for far eastern affairs. Bundy is now assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs.

3. The Senate is considering "the possible political impact" of the Bobby Baker case and is certain to take "proper action."

4. The fact that Henry Cabot Lodge, United States ambassador to South Viet Nam, has been mentioned as a possible Republican Presidential candidate is not impairing the conduct of this country's policy in Viet Nam.

5. He is "encouraged" and not pessimistic about the outlook for eventually easing international tensions and co-existing peacefully with Russia.

3 Times Speed of Sound

The President disclosed today at the beginning of his press conference that the United States has successfully developed an advanced, experimental jet military plane—designated the A-11—which has been tested in sustained flight at a speed of more than 2,000 miles an hour at altitudes in excess of 70,000 feet.

The speed mentioned by the President is three times the speed of sound.

"The performance of the A-11 far exceeds that of any other aircraft in the world today," the President said. "The development of this aircraft . . . has been made possible by major advances in

aircraft technology of great significance to both military and commercial application."

Several Being Tested

Several A-11s, he announced, are now being flight-tested at Edwards air force base in California.

The chief executive said the A-11 project was started in 1959. He said he was lifting the secrecy surrounding the development of the plane during the last five years "to permit the orderly exploitation of this advanced technology of our military and commercial planes." He said the advanced A-11, with its high speed and altitude and its ability to establish and maintain a high altitude, meant it would facilitate supersonic transport plane for eventual commercial use will be "greatly assisted by the lessons learned from this A-11 program."

As an example, he cited the important technological advance in the A-11 project of mastering the metallurgy and fabrication of the metal titanium needed for the aircraft to resist the high-temperature heat which occurs in flight at such high speeds.

A Missle Interceptor

The President disclosed that the A-11s are being tested at Edwards air force base to determine their capabilities as long range interceptors.

Government sources said the A-11 is designed to intercept either enemy planes or ballistic missiles in flight. The new plane is not designed to carry nuclear bombs.

These government sources—altho profile photographs of the A-11 were made public—declined to disclose whether the plane has a single jet engine or is multi-engine, or the size of its crew.

The photograph showed a need-on-rod, pencil-like plane with a very long nose mounted far in the rear.

Government officials said the A-11 is being kept highly secret under the strictest

security. The plane is being developed in secrecy and is not to be disclosed to the public.

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